

**MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION SPARKLES WITH
NIGHT UNDER THE STARS**
Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



Over 200 LACDMH staff, clients, advocates, Los Angeles County Board representatives, community-based organizations and Los Angeles County Mental Health Commissioners gathered at Catalina's Jazz and Supper Club in Hollywood on Thursday, October 22, 2015, to enjoy the 16th *Annual Profiles of Hope Volunteer and Program Recognition Awards*, presented by the L. A. County Mental Health Commission.



The soiree began with a social hour on the patio outside Catalina's at 5:30 PM, and moved inside the jazz club promptly at 6:30, where attendees enjoyed dinner and music provided by the highly acclaimed jazz quartet from the Los Angeles High School of the Performing Arts.



The evening program commenced with new Mental Health Commissioner Etelvina De La Torre, who served as Master of Ceremonies. Commissioner De La Torre introduced Mental Health Commission Chair Larry Gasco, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., who welcomed the crowd and acknowledged former commissioners Frank Baron, Jerry Lubin, AICP, Barry Perrou, and Songhai Armstead, who cannot continue serving as she was appointed a judgeship.



Paco Renteria presented the Outstanding Consumer Advocate Award to Dorothy Banks, who thanked her higher power for strength.

Next up was David Pilon, who presented the Outreach and Engagement Award to Mental Health America of Los Angeles.



Cathy Warner, L.C.S.W., LACDMH ASOC Deputy Director, accepted the Award for Outstanding Program for the Wellness Outreach Worker (W.O.W.) Program. Eric Barrera, VALOR worker and graduate of the WOW Program, spoke about WOW benefits.

Commissioner Judy Cooperberg proudly introduced Jean Harris, who received the Family Advocate Award.



Victoria Adams from the LA County District Attorney's Office accepted the Leadership and Social Inclusion Award on behalf of District Attorney Jackie Lacey.



Public Affairs Director Kathleen Piché presented the Personal Legacy Award to actor, musician and disability rights champion Robert David Hall.

LACDMH Medical Director Rod Shaner, M.D., presented the last award of the evening, the Exemplary Service Award, to LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, D.S.W., who will be retiring on November 6, 2015, after serving L.A. County for seventeen years.



Closing comments were made by Commissioner De La Torre, who thanked everyone for their participation.

As part of a newer tradition, the Mental Health Commission Awards themselves were re-named the *Isaiah*, to honor the image of “logo man” (or logo person) that former Transition Age Youth (TAY) client Isaiah Hinnerichs created for the department in 2010. Isaiah shared his journey of being a foster youth, homeless at 14, depressed and suicidal in the original *Profiles of Hope* series produced by the LACDMH Public Information Office.